

Abraham Lincoln's Family was Affected when He Chose Government as a Profession

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Abraham Lincoln has always been a well-known figure in history. Most know him as the sixteenth President of the United States of America; others knew him as Dad, son, brother or just Abe. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be the son, wife, mother or father to such a famous figure in history?

Abraham Lincoln's family had always meant a great deal to him. You might find the family in the living room reading the paper, eating together at the dinner table, or deliberating with one another on current events. Having each other there when one of them needed help was important to all of them.

When Lincoln ran for the presidency, his family was greatly affected. He was away from home giving speeches continually and traveling to various states, even as far away as Kentucky. His family members tried to be by his side as often as they could. At a young age, Abraham became interested in politics, and, after Lincoln and Mary Todd married, she began taking an interest in politics, as well. Lincoln and Mary's three sons, Robert, William and Thomas, also took great interest in politics at a young age. Even though William died at the age of eleven, he had already taken an interest in government. Lincoln enjoyed the feeling that at least one of his children would follow in his footsteps. His son, Robert served as Secretary of War under presidents Garfield and Arthur, and some time later served under Benjamin Harrison, who appointed him minister to Great Britain. Lincoln's three sons grew up watching their father debate others on current

topics. All of his life, Robert looked to his father for advice and idolized him for what he did to distinguish his government standing.

After Abraham Lincoln became the sixteenth President of the United States, the family was overjoyed and proud of their father for having accomplished something so great that only fifteen other people before him had the chance to experience. As you can imagine, Lincoln and his family were under extreme pressure early in his presidency. Lincoln became president at a very difficult time in United States history, especially having to deal with the Civil War. This affected not only his immediate family, but also the families living in the North and South.

Two years into Lincoln's Presidency, he and his family were faced with another adversity, when William became very sick and was not expected to live. Sadly, William died on February 20, 1862, in the White House at the tender age of eleven. William's death devastated the Lincoln family, and cast a dark shadow over the remaining years of Lincoln's presidency, already made tragic by the Civil War.

After the devastating loss of their son, William, the Lincoln family thought nothing else could happen. The Lincoln family was looking forward to better days ahead. However, just three years later, on April 14, 1865, Lincoln and Mary Todd were together again attending a show at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D. C. when John Wilkes Booth shot Mr. Lincoln. This devastated Mary and her children, who had not only lost the person they had admired most, but lost a father and husband.

Mary, along with Robert remained by Abraham's bedside throughout the night. In fact, seeing his mother so devastated, Robert sent for her best friend, Mrs. Dixon, the wife of Connecticut senator Dixon, to console her. Hours later, Lincoln passed away.

Robert's and Mary's life would never be the same. [From David Donald, *Lincoln*; Edward, Robert, William, and Thomas Lincoln, <www.nps.gov/archive/liho/family/family.htm> (Sept. 6, 2006); Mark Neely, Jr., *Abraham Lincoln*; Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln*; and Ida Tarbell, *Abraham Lincoln and His Ancestors*.]